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SUBJECT: ENGAGING KOPASSUS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: STATE 2603

Classified By: Deputy Polcouns Daniel Rochman, reasons 1.4(b+d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: As instructed reftel, poloff met with officials of the Indonesian Department of Defense and the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs on January 14 to raise reftel questions concerning accountability for past gross human rights violations by Army Special Forces (KOPASSUS) personnel. Interlocutors at both ministries expressed a willingness for a frank and open dialogue on human rights issues relating to KOPASSUS and stressed that the planned February visit of the current and prior commanders of KOPASSUS to Washington would provide an outstanding opportunity for a direct exchange on these issues. Post has not formally vetted KOPASSUS Unit 81, but is not aware of any allegations of gross human rights violations by the unit. End Summary.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

¶2. (SBU) In response to the questions raised in reftel, Department of Defense Director for Strategic Environment Analysis Brigadier General Subekti said the GOI wished to be as open and transparent as possible with American counterparts in sharing information on past punishment of KOPASSUS personnel that violated human rights, procedures in place to prevent future violations, procedures on investigation, and punishment, as necessary, of violators.

¶3. (SBU) BG Subekti said the GOI and KOPASSUS were prepared to review with the USG allegations of past gross human violations by KOPASSUS personnel. BG Subekti noted that the GOI had already shared such data and information on several occasions, notably during the September 2009 briefing for Embassy staff at KOPASSUS headquarters and in subsequent meetings. An important opportunity to deepen and broaden the dialogue would be the proposed February visit to Washington of current KOPASSUS Commander Major General Laudewyk F. Paulus and previous KOPASSUS Commander Major General Pramono Edhie Wibowo, currently Commander of Regional Command (KODAM) 3 for Central Java. Generals Paulus and Wibowo hoped for a frank and open exchange.

COORDINATING MINISTRY FOR POLITICAL, LEGAL, AND SECURITY
AFFAIRS

¶4. (SBU) In response to the same set of questions, Ambassador Albert Matondang, Coordinating Ministry for Political Legal and Security Affairs Deputy II For Foreign Political Affairs, noted that the GOI had obtained convictions for a number of KOPASSUS members found to have committed gross human rights violations in the past -- for example, eleven KOPASSUS personnel sentenced to prison for

the 1998 Team Rose abduction case and seven sentenced to prison for the 2001 Theys Eluay murder case.

¶5. (SBU) Looking forward, Matondang continued, the democratically elected government of Indonesia was fully committed to taking steps to ensure that new human rights violations did not occur and that if they did, that those responsible would be held accountable. The government's commitment to human rights was underlined, he said, by the decade of political reform in the Reformasi era that, among other steps, had placed the military under civilian control, removed the military from politics, and instituted thorough human rights training for military personnel.

¶6. (SBU) In response to reftel question about whether the GOI was prepared to review with the USG alleged human rights violations by KOPASSUS over the past 20 years, Matondang said that while the GOI was prepared to do so, it could be difficult in some cases to reconstruct the events of two decades ago. In response to separate questions from reftel, Matondang said the GOI was prepared to discuss the range of corrective actions possible under Indonesian law beyond prosecution and discuss the structure of KOPASSUS, as doing so would help reduce misunderstandings about the Indonesian justice system and military reforms.

UNIT 81

¶7. (C) Reftel raised the possibility of a gradual reengagement with KOPASSUS beginning with counterterrorism Unit 81. Unit 81 is generally recognized by outside observers as having a clean human rights record. Although, in accordance with the Department's Leahy vetting rules, we have not formally vetted Unit 81, we are not aware of any allegations of gross human rights violations by Unit 81. Unit 81 was formed under its current designation in 2001.
HUME